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A LETTER FROM A GENTLEMAN

To the *Honourable*

Ed. Howard Esq;

Occasioned

By a *CIVILIZD EPISTLE*

OF

Mr. DRYDEN'S,

Before his Second Edition of his

INDIAN EMPEROUR.

In the *SAVOY*,
Printed by *Thomas Newcomb*, 1668.

A

LETTER

FROM A

GENTLEMAN

To his Relations

Ed. Howard Esq;

By CIVILIZED BRUTE

OR

A DAYDEAN'S

UM

SIR,

I Have now for ſome time expected an Anſwer from your Honorable Brother, Sir *Robert Howard*, to Mr. *Drydens* Epiſtle before his *Indian Emperour*; But I perceive that your Brother thinks it unworthy of his Thoughts; nor can any Ingenious Perſon blame Him, that He rather deſpiſes to give Himſelf the leaſt Trouble, where nothing of any weight of Reaſon can juſtly challenge it; and beſides, poſſibly being conſcious to Himſelf, that he could not ſo well make a Return in a *Billinſgate* ſtile, which he ſaw ſo exactly performed by his Angry Opponent. But leaſt Sir, that ſcold ng Text ſhould want a Commentary, I humbly offer unto you theſe my Obſervations upon it, and will make no Excuſe for my own weakneſs, ſince the Cauſe it ſelf affords Abilities enough to any that has a juſt Reſpect to the peculiar Honour of your Brother, and a General Love to Juſtice, and Good Manners.

But having called this Angry Author, Mr. *Dryden*, and *He* having been diſpleaſed before with that Honourable Perſon for calling *Him* an Author; I will rectifie both Er-

rors, and try to Pleaſe him (being a wrathfull man with the Title of an Eſquire, which he Beſtows on Himſelf, or modeſtly endures his Bookſeller to put upon him; yet withall hoping he can prove it better by the Heraulds than he has done the Reſt; I proceed Sir, to take notice, that the Squire having fixed ſome Ironical Complements upon that Honourable Perſon your Brother, inſtead of the Cauſe he is to maintain, he takes notice of two verſes in the beginning of the *Duke of Lerma*, for which he would have him loſe the opinion of ſober men, as it ſeems he has done His; not that it is a Conſequence, that he ſhould loſe any worthy mans Good opinion for the Squires Ill one, who perhaps not ſo well able to defend his own Paradoxes, is diſordered with ſo much paſſion, which ſo confounds his expreſſions, that I know not what he is moſt angry at. If he means the Two firſt Lines, and the other Twenty, (which he glances at) are Nonſenſe, or Ill ones; the Reader is the beſt Judge, and he only ſaying they are ſo, it is enough to ſay I think they are not ſo: But if the Squire would have it underſtood, that the Honourable Perſon uſed ſome things in the old Play, he has acknowledged it already, and profeſſed he would have uſed more, had not the Alteration of the whole deſign deprived him of the Benefit. But the Squire having writ down the two firſt lynes, what ever he means, I that have read the old Play will aſſure him, that the Honourable Perſon uſed but the two firſt words of it, though he has preſerved the method in the beginning. But the Squire perhaps is juſtly angry to ſee any one uſe the leaſt thing of another Writer, and enter into his Juriſdiction, claiming the right of Theft perhaps by continual Cuſtome; witneſs his *Maiden Queen* ſtoln out of the *Queen of Corinth*: a great part of his *Indian Emperour*, and moſt of his *Mock Aſtrologer*, which he means (for he is a Critick) the *Feign'd Aſtrologer* out of *French* Playes and Romances; from whence I cannot but obſerve

that

that he is in danger to be thought an ill-natur'd Squire; ſince the Character of an Ingroſſing Plagiary may poſſibly be more juſtly due to him than the Title of Eſquire, which he has been pleaſed to aſſume.

The next thing Sir, that I ſhall take notice of, is his admiration, to be thought ſo ridiculous as to diſpute whether Proſe or Verſe be neereſt to ordinary Converſation; by the Squires favour the Honourable Perſon never ſaid ſo, but only preſum'd to ſay, that a Play ſeemed to repreſent Perſons ſpeaking *Extempore*, which indeed is ordinary Converſation, and then acknowledged that the Squire raiſed Arguments only unanſwerable againſt himſelf, by laying down the rule for every thing, to be neereſt the nature of what it repreſents: And I hope this is no fault in the Honourable Perſon, who never contended for the Rule; ſo that as to this Particular, I think there needs no more to be ſayd, only adding this ſmall obſervation, that the Squire cannot endure to be thought Ridiculous, though he deſerves it.

The Squire is then pleaſed to tell us of a Gentleman, who maintained a Contradiction in the face of 300 Perſons; when he will vouchſafe to tell us the Perſon and Contradiction, the Party I ſuppoſe will give an anſwer; which by what I have heard, I believe none can be ignorant, that Honourable Perſon can as little as any be ſuſpected to be the Party; and yet I dare not ſay ſo much for him, as the Squire once ventur'd to ſay on his own behalf to a Lady of moſt Eminent Quality (equall'd with a great Virtue and Parts) when he was ſo bold, as to tell her, a Gentleman could not erre, and then certainly a Squire is infallible.

After this he ſeems ſatisfied, that the Honourable Perſon ſayes he had rather read good Verſe than Proſe; I believe he had, and rather his, than his Proſe, unleſs it were written with a better temper; but the Squire demands no more

then

than This from all others, I am his Interceſſer, he may obtain his deſire; and leave it to them that are pleaſed to grant it, to judge, whether they have better'd his Arguments by their Affections.

Next he urges, that a Play is ſuppoſed to be the work of a Poet, imitating or repreſenting the Converſation of ſeveral perſons; the words of the Honorable Perſon, juſt before, (which he quotes, and quarrels at) are, That a Play is ſuppoſed to be a Compoſition of ſeveral perſons ſpeaking *extempore*, and yet the Squire craves leave to diſſent, though he ſayes the ſame thing, all but the word *Extempore*. And if there be any other way of Converſation, 'tis only known to the Squire, who has the ſharpneſs to ſee a difference in the ſame thing.

But now the Squire ſayes he will be bolder, (truely I thought he had been bold enough before) and doubts not to make good a Paradox: for having ſaid, that all things muſt be neereſt the nature of what they repreſent; he is turn'd about now, and ſayes Proſe ſhould not be uſed, becauſe it is too neer Converſe, which is the nature of what it repreſents. I ſuppoſe the Squire had need of a Legion of Parts (which he ſpeaks of) to maintain this: for ſometimes every thing is beſt, that is neereſt the nature of what it repreſents; and preſently it is the worſe for being too neer it; and then as luckily proceeds to tell us, that the moſt skilfull Painters affirm, there may be too great a likeneſs, and too neer a reſemblance in a Picture; I am very confident the Squire never heard an indifferent good Painter, much leſs an excellent one, affirme ſo ridiculous a thing: but to ſalve his credit in this, he is left to bring (if he can) ſuch a Certificate from ſo excellent a Painter, whoſe great Authority may make us ſubmit our ſence ſo far as to believe the Paradox: But were Sir *Anthony Vandyke* now living, (who I ſuppoſe we may allow to have been excellent in that Art) the Squire would hardly get a Certificate from

him

him, whose Fame, if it be true what he sayes, he has blasted in one sentence, for he has proved him to make worse Pictures than any, because he made all more exactly like, then ever any man did. But I leave the persuit of such absurdities, nor do I pretend to dwell upon his Reasons, where the honorable Person repeats his, and only fairly returns his own, I leave them to the Reader, who in my opinion will easily judge, that the honorable person could perceive nothing of any new weight to move him to a reply; and I am confident there had been no answer return'd, had not the Squires Passion led him to Invectives, forreigne to the Argument.

The next favour, the honorable person receives from the Esquire, is about that verse of *Seneca*.

Reserate clusos Regii Postes Laris.

And here he will neither allow Him to understand a Latine word, nor an English word; Notwithstanding those Testimonies which in both kinds that honourable person hath given of himselfe: but if he had not understood the word *Resero*, nor could have spelt, whereby to have search't it in a Dictionary; yet since the Esquire was pleased to tell us the English of it, he might, (had he resolved to have used any modesty,) have believed it a mistake sooner then so much Ignorance in any one, as not to understand the difference of the words to open and to shut. I suppose therefore in stead of wittily Chiding the Printer, he ought to Chide Himself; But in one Case of the Squires I cannot tell, whether I may assume the Liberty to Chide the Printer for a mistake he committed in the first Edition of his *Indian Emperour*, in this Excellent Verse——

——*And follow Fate, that does too fast pursue.*

which

which in the second Edition is thus Corrected ——

——*And follow Fate, that would too fast Pursue.*

There is another Line in his *Astræa Redux*, which, because the Squire is so severe, I will not omit.

An horrid stillness first invades the Eare.

I have not heard of the like Expression unless in a Tale of an Officer, that Commanded a Centinel not to stirr a Foot, but walk up and down, and see what he could hear. Now whether this first Non-sence be Rectified by the Printer, or by the Squires Encrease of Understanding, or, where fault the last is, I dare not Determine.

But, for all this, the Squire need not believe, that the Honourable Person can have any Apprehension of the examining any faults of his, since his Passion guides him so ill, as not to distinguish between a Fault and a Mistake, if it be believed, that he understands a Word of English; and therefore he is rather Invited to use his Freedome: For, 'tis possible some may Believe in his Promise, that may find nothing in his Performance. So, leaving him to his own Liberty, I pass over his Arguments, not seeing any thing in them, that appears (to my Apprehension at least) either New or Weighty, but leave them to the Readers better Determination; and proceed to the next marke of his displeasure, which is so ill placed, that the Squire is Angry with that Honourable Person for Calling the Muses his long Acquaintance; if he meanes in point of time, that Honourable Person is onely a proper Judge, whether the time seemed long to him, or noe; but if he meanes he ought to pretend no Acquaintance in the least with them; it is enough to Referr this piece of Anger to those, who have Read his Writings, and among them, the last he

obliged

obliged the World with, the *Duell of the Stages*, is a ſufficient Teſtimony, that the Squire is more angry than he ought to be.

The next Charge the Squire is pleaſed to draw up againſt Him, is about Notions Politick, and Grave, tending to the Inſtruction of Princes, and Reformation of States: I know not, that the Honourable Perſon ſeems Guilty of any ſuch Deſign in the leaſt, but if the Squire be, as he ſayes he is, for Diſtributive Juſtice, we may juſtly preſume that when his *Indian Emperour* was firſt acted, he intended to inſtruct and reform all Churches in Polemical Divinity, by his admirable Diſpute between a Chriſtian and a Heathen Prieſt; which alſo ſhows how great a loſs the Church had of him, when he was diverted from entering into Orders.

Then he quarrels with the Style of that Honourable Perſon (I wiſh he had propoſed him one fit to change for) which he ſays the Criticks have branded with the Name of Obſcurity, and Falſe Grammar: Who theſe Criticks be, he is not pleaſed to tell us, but writes, as he would have preacht, as a certain Author hath it; by which the Squire ſeems to be one of the *Quidams* damn'd at leaſt in *Quevedo's Viſions*, where I leave the Squire to read his farther Deſcription.

But in his next ſcolding Paragraph, he is more unhappy in his Anger, and quarrels with the Honourable Perſon, for ſaying he was now fettered in Buſineſs of more unpleaſant Natures, which he will have to be State matters. But the Squire was very much miſtaken, for I by accident once heard that Honourable Perſon complain that two tedious Suits in *Chancery* had almoſt deprived him of the right uſe of any time; and yet I think he need not be aſhamed of thoſe Services he endeavours to do his King and Countrey; ſo that either way the Squires Diſpleaſure is very unjuſtly applied: And above all men, this angry

Squire ought not to be his Interpreter: But his Fortune, and that of the Honourable Persons are different; for the Squire mistakingly charges him that the corruption of a Poet, was the generation of a Statesman; but on the contrary the Squire having been imployed as a Puny Statesman under his Father a Zealous Committee-man, and Sir *Gilbert Pickering* a crafty Privy Councellour in the late times, it may more properly be applied to the Squire, That the corruption of a Statesman is the generation of a Poet Laureat.

Then he quarrels at the word *Ubi*, had that Honourable Person said *Where*, in English, the Squire would have been angry too.

Then he is displeased and sayes that to perform the manner of a thing is New English; that cannot be helpt; but it is Old English to every one else, since, the Proverb is so common, That the manner of doing a thing, is as much as the thing it self.

Then he snarles about the word *Taste*, which is usually applied to any kind of liking: but I should be as rude as he is, to entertain the Reader long with such Vomits of Choler.

The next Displeasure he shews, is, that the Honourable Person sayes, *That 'tis not necessary for Poets to study strict Reason* (nor good Manners neither, if the Poet Laureat be admitted President) since they are so used to a greater Latitude than is allowed by that severe Inquisition. But he sayes Moral Truth is the Mistrisse of the Poet, as well as of the Philosopher: Poesie must resemble Natural Truth, but it must be Ethical; the Poet dresses Truth, and adorns Nature, but does not alter them. These are the Squires words, but since he does not prove this in the same place, I will furnish the Reader with an exact Proof, written by himself in a wonderful Stanza, in his wonderful Poem of the wonderful year 1666. And withall it tells

us

us how the Fire of *London* was put out, which few Countrey people knew before; the Stanza runs thus:

A hollow Christal Pyramid he takes,
In Firmamental Waters dipt above;
With this a broad Extinguisher he makes,
And hoods the Flames, which to their Quarry strove.

Now the Reader may easily judge, whether this be not Moral Truth; if this does not resemble Natural Truth, if it be not Ethical, and if the Squire has not drest Truth, and adorned Nature, but not altered them.

In the next place he sayes (with Truth still Annext to his Poetry) that the Honourable Person attaques all the Antients, and Moderns, while he fights (as he says) under their ample Shields, as little *Teucer* fought under the large Buckler of *Ajax Telamon*. I know not why the small Squire compares himself to little *Teucer*, unless it be very pleasant to him to talk of such a safe way of fighting: for I never read that the Honourable Person blamed the Antients for writing Verse, but him, or any, that lay down Rules against the writing of it. For Verse could not be thought neerest Nature by all the Antients, since *Seneca* writ all his Tragedies in Verse, and *Terence* all his Comedies, which may be the Squire did not remember, or knew not. Now if Verse in Tragedy, and Verse in Comedy be both neerest Nature, the Squire deserves his Lawrel.

But now the Squire begins to be more kind, and offers the Honourable Person his Help in a Logical way, and makes a Syllogisme for him, which is, if one Stage cannot properly present two Rooms or Houses, much less two Countreys or Kingdoms, then there can be no unity of place: but one Stage cannot properly perform this, therefore there can be no unity of place: And then he de-

nies that which he calls his Minor Propoſition. But what needs the Squire make a Syllogiſme for another, who has no reaſon to like it. Being pleaſed to repeat that which is more truly the ſenſe of the Honourable Perſon, which is, that a Stage being one place cannot be two, I think this is true, and therefore can as little be two Houſes as two Countries. But the Squire ſays it may repreſent two Rooms ſucceſſively, ſo it may two Kingdomes. This Bog he labours to get out of, and I appeal to the Reader, whether he ſticks or no. I was going to charge this Notion on his Fancy, but a little after he ſays, that Fancy and Reaſon go hand in hand, the firſt cannot leave the laſt behind. If this be true, the Squire has ſalved all the Errors of fantaſtical people, together with his own. But I doubt that Fancy and Reaſon are not ſo good Friends, and if the Squire had kept them cloſer together, we ſhould have believed better of their Friendſhips.

The Squire is then pleaſed to Confeſs that the leſſer cannot Comprehend the Greater: yet in a little Glaſs a whole Room and many peſons may be repreſented, or ſeen: ſo may a Country be ſeen out of a little hole of a Window, but the Room cannot get into the Glaſs, nor the Country into the Hole. But the *Honourable Perſon* ſpoke not of what may ſeem repreſented, but of what really could be; and then inſerted there could be no ſuch thing as they pretend to imitate, which was to come neereſt to the Nature of that which could not be at all.

But immediately he appears as unhappy in his Philoſophy as in his Logick. When the Honourable Perſon only ſpeaks of things abſolutely impoſſibile; the Squire talks of that which is onely ſo *ex parte*, and then would make it no Impoſſibility, by the help of the Firſt mover to alter the Nature of it. When by the help of the Squire (who is the firſt mover of ſuch Phyloſophy) the nature of things are ſo altered thot two can be one, the Squire is triumphant, till then 'tis ſubmitted to the Reader.

But

But now he ſayes the Honourable Perſon is to be Excuſed for declaring againſt the Unity of Time, being a perſon Intereſſed, for the time of the Play of the *Duke* of *Lerma* contained many years; if this be true, he is not to be blamed; for by his favour he writ againſt that which is impoſſible to be made a Rule, not againſt any time ſhorter, or longer uſed by any one. But if he had Argued according to what he writ, ſure 'tis more Ingenuous, than for the Squire, who ſo pleads for the Unity of time to write the *Indian Emperour*, which contains the time of *Cortez* his landing to the Death of *Montezuma*; let him conſider this, and it will appear, he ought to be more diſpleaſed with his own Diſingenuity.

And now comming to aſſault the Honourable Perſon, when he ſayes he grows feeble, (which is the moſt ſeaſonable time for the Squire to attacque any one in) he ſayes according to his uſual Cuſtom, that the Honourable Perſon improves his obſervatiou to an Argument, that he might have the glory to Confute it. But it appears on the contrary by his ſlighting of him, that the Honourable Perſon apprehends no glory in confuting any Argument of his: And on the other ſide, I believe he never thought any obſervation of the Squires worthy to be drawn into an Argument, and accordingly, the Honorable Perſon called it an Argument, or Obſervation being it ſeems as unable, as others are to know juſtly what Name or Title to fix on ſuch a poſitive Theſis.

But now the ſtorm ceaſes, and the Illuſtrious Squire is pleaſed to ſhine with more gentle beams on the Honourable Perſon; and fawningly ſayes, he laies all at his feet, and Honours his Perſon, and Parts. The Squire muſt needs be believed, ſince he has endeavored to deſcribe him to be the owner of ſuch Excellent ones. He ſayes, he has often imployed his Pen in his Commendations, I hope he means this Time for one. He Adds then, He has many particu-

lar

lar obligations to him. In this the Squire is like to be credited, since this Return he has made, is so grateful a Testimony of it; yet at the last the Squire is pleased to give him the Title of a Noble opponent; and to this last I am confident he will Receive a just return from the Honourable Person, when ever the Squire pleases to give him cause to call him so. In the mean time, I believe the Squire cannot reasonably expect it from him, since I have heard from a very brave Gentleman, who was lately engaged to waite upon the Squire, that his cold Answer has discouraged the Honourable Person from such an Expectation.

Thus, Sir, I have Travelled through this foul way, and have Preserved my self as clean as possibly I could; yet it was so dirty, that some Testimony of such a Passage must needs stick to any that goes thorow it. But, Sir, if I have done like a good Scavenger, and carrried the Filth back to himself the proper Laystall I doubt not but to Receive from you and all other Just persons, the opinion that I love Justice, and good manners, which, I hope, will render me not unworthy of the Title of

SIR,

Your faithful

and

humble Servant

R. F.

Post-

Poſtſcript.

Sir,

SInce I had writ this Letter to you, I happened to meet a Gentleman, who diſcourſing with me about this Argument, told me he could ſhow me in a Copy of verſes of one of the moſt Excellent Perſons of our time, this Queſtion Decided with as clear Generoſity as Reaſon. I begged him to do me the favour, and he immediately ſhewed me the Prologue of the Earl of *Orrery* to his Play of *Henry the fifth*. I read it with that content, that I could not but inſert it as an Exact Deciſion of the Argument.

THE PROLOGUE.

WE have with Forraign Tales ſo fill'd your Ears,
As if our Poets were all Foreigners;
This Author begs you'll lend him but two hours,
To entertain you with your Anceſtours.
He thinks no ſtories merit to be known,
Nor can inſtruct us better than our own.
But look not for great Actions in a Play,
Contracted to the limits of a Day.
Nor where the Scene is to one place confin'd,
To thoſe ſtrict Rules the French their Poets bind:
Yet none of them for this a Reaſon ſhows,
But to their Mode of Writing, as of Clothes,

They

They think the English ever should agree;
Well, when some wit of theirs will let us see,
Why in two hours they on their Stages play
That which presents the Turns of a whole day;
Our Poet then will make it full as clear,
That in two hours he may include a year.
It were not fit, in stories of that Age,
When we rul'd France, *French Laws should rule our Stage.*
Nor is it just in Poetry to bind
Fancy, which is tormented, when confin'd.
He hopes you will excuse him, if he strives
To break those Laws a Forreign Nation gives.
For sure, without your leave, he'l ne're submit,
That those whom our Swords rul'd, should rule our wit.

FINIS.